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Is America Waiting for Another Tea Party? Tea Party Movement

Abstract

“Obama I am not your ATM!” This is one of the most popular slogans that are chanted by the opponents of Obama’s reforms, who are gathered along the initiative of Tea Party.

Tea Party is a nascent, rank-and-file movement of discontented people against present establishment, economy crisis, increasing state debt and first of all against reforms and the policy that is pursued by the administration of Obama. The movement includes people from middle class, especially graduated conservatives. Its members communicate through the Internet. In whole United States, under “the tea flag” are creating groups and associations in which are led discussions about current situations and planning protests.

Main Tea Party’s postulates are contained in a slogan: “lower taxes, small government, lower deficit.” Supporters of the initiative chant slogans “capitalism, not communism!,” “Stop the rampant spending!,” “An end of the socialism in America!” They are worried about arisen of the welfare state, similar to European ones. They demand therefore, that the government returned to the role of the “guardian” and thus respect individual’s right to manage private property and the effects of their own works. Cause, every single person knows the best how to invest his own capital.

Tea Party has an ambition to become the third force in American policy. In February there was conducted an opinion poll for CNN/Opinion Research Corp that follows that Tea Party is supported by 35% of Americans and 16% of them want to vote for Tea Party (the movement receives votes especially from Republicans). Single-members districts in the U.S. would make that the conservatives would have to split their votes and the Democrats would have a certain victory.

The aims of the paper are to present nascent force in US policy, that “is a result from fear and anger against current establishment” and an attempt to answer the following question: What changes is America awaiting? Is the new Movement an alternative to the existing duopoly, especially the Grand Old Party?

As Alexis de Tocqueville noticed in the 19th century, the United States is the country in which the idea of associations is the most widely adopted and in which this powerful tool is used in a highly developed way. These associations have continued to play a key role in civic self-organization of the society. Their role is to coax people away from their

private lives, as well as to encourage contributing to the affairs of their society. Joint actions bring people together, creating a sense of interdependence. Active participation in the public life makes humans more aware of existing problems, which helps to create a sense of responsibility for the welfare of their country or of their local community. Engagement in associations multiplies the power of individuals, defends them from abuse of the central authority and protects against a tyranny of the majority.

The appearing of the Tea Party Movement (TPM) on the U.S. political scene is a prime example showing that the description of American society made by the 19th century historian is still true. While some liberal researchers perceive TPM as a “product of fear and racism against Obama’s administration”¹ or “libertarian mob,”² the polls shows that it is favorably viewed by almost 41% of Americans, which gives them more adherents than either Republican Party (29%) or Democratic Party (35%).³

But whether the TPM is, as Ch. Berlet asserts “the type of right-wing populist movement seen previously throughout U.S. history”⁴ or a new, “genuine popular movement, one that has managed to unite a number of ideological strains from U.S. history?”⁵ The objective of the article is to answer the question about the phenomena of the Tea Party Movement and its possible impact on politics in the coming years.

By comparing the political platform and demography of the TPM to previous conservative movements, like the *John Birch Society* from the 60s., or the *Moral Majority* from the 80s., and the *Christian Coalition of America* (CC) from the 90s., some similarities emerge. The first one was characterized as “ultraconservative, extremist and far right,”⁶ whereas the second one was defined as a moral movement created “to defend the free enterprise system, the family and Bible morality.”⁷ The *Christian Coalition of America* included Neo-Evangelists and Christian fundamentalists and was founded to protect fundamental Christian values.⁸

The tenets of the Tea Party are low taxes, reducing the role of government, and a hard counter-terrorism policy that affirms global hegemony of the United States. Their main platform, called the *Contract from America*, is based on three slogans:

¹ Vanessa Williamson, Theda Skocpol, John Coggin, “The Tea Party and the remarking of republican conservatism,” *Perspectives on Politics*, (accessed March 2011: 34).

² Mark Lilla, “The Tea Party Jacobins,” *The New York Review of Books*, May 27, 2010.

³ WSJ/NBC News Poll: “Tea Party tops democrats and republicans,” *Wall Street Journal*, December 16, 2009. <http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire/2009/12/16/wsjnbc-news-poll-tea-party-tops-democratsand-republicans/> (accessed May 25, 2010).

⁴ Chip Berlet, “Taking Tea Parties seriously: Corporate globalization, populism and resentment,” *Perspectives on Global Development & Technology* 10, no. 1 (2011): 12.

⁵ John B. Judis, “Tea minus zero; The Tea Party menace will not go quietly,” *The New Republic*, May 27, 2010: 19.

⁶ Marvin Liebman, “Perspective on politics; The big tent isn’t big enough; By allowing extremists to flourish openly, the GOP forces out those who represent the party’s moderate values,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 17, 1996, 5; Michael Gerson, “Looking for conservatism,” *Times Daily* (Florence, Ala.), March 10, 2009.

⁷ John Saloma III, *Ominous Politics* (New York: Hill and Wang, New York, 1984), 15.

⁸ *Christian Coalition of America*, www.cc.org (accessed May 25, 2010).

individual freedom, limited government, and free market.⁹ Supporters of the Movement believe that responsible government should respect the right of individuals to spend their money freely because it is a fruit of their own labor. According to them, high taxes limit human freedom. Since this freedom is connected with economic freedom, enthusiasts of the Tea Party are in strong opposition to the intervention of the state in the free market. They want a return of the government to the role of the night guard.¹⁰ By using phraseology such as “the government is always the problem,” they effectively demonstrate that the health care reform is an example of taking responsibility for health problems away from individuals to the government. In reality, it is rather half-hearted to attempt to regulate an uncontrolled market of medical services and insurance.

Moreover, the demography of TPM supporters is fully in line with the above-mentioned movements. According to CBS/New York Times polls, 73% of adherents identify themselves as conservative and generally disapproving of Obama’s (Democratic) administration.¹¹ What is more, the great majority of them are white, middle-class and suburban or small-town inhabitants. Although overwhelming majority of the supporters of the Movement are Catholics or Protestants, either “born again” or Evangelicals, who are against abortion (74%), and gay-marriage (81%), in their political platform they do not mention about abortion or other pro-life causes. Their beliefs are displayed in relation to economic and political issues and are contained in slogans, like “God hates taxes!”, “God, Guts, and Guns Bought Our Freedom and Is Needed to Keep It!” or “Thank God for the 2nd Amendment!”¹² This issue distinguishes the TPM from the previous movements.

⁹ TPM ideas are especially close to the R. Reagan’s platform of economy reforms from 1980s. So called *Reaganomics*, was based on reduction of the government spending increase, income tax, government regulation of economy, etc. William A. Niskanen, *Reaganomics: An insider’s account of the policies and the people* (Oxford:Oxford University Press, 1988).

¹⁰ Looking at the activities of the present administration, Tea Party is worried that Obama wants to transform United States in a European-style welfare state. While European citizens expect actively fighting the crisis and intervening in the economy from their governments, Tea Party members think something completely opposite. They would like a minimal state. They believe that ordinary citizens and entrepreneurs would deal with this crisis in a better way, because average person knows better than a governmental bureaucrat how to spend his own money. They regard saving failing banks with the money of the taxpayers and the stimulus package as scandalous. For example they are against subsidizing automotive industry by the federal budget. Currently they are collecting signatures for requesting cancellation of the health care reform under the slogan “Repeal the bill.” And what is not surprising, most of them do not like the enormity of the budget expenditures that could lead to reforms causing the federal government to receive more authority.

¹¹ Kate Zernike, Megan Thee-Brenan, “Poll finds Tea Party Backers wealthier and more educated,” *The New York Times*, April 14, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/15/us/politics/15poll.html> (accessed April 26, 2010). Seventy seven percent of them declared that they are conservatives. GottaLaff, CNN Poll-itics: Who are the Tea Party activists? College-educated upscale white males!, February 17, 2010, http://3.bp.blogspot.com/_mupm2BmJtc/S3wl2rye8xI/AAAAAAAAAKVA/mZEgdxjn8Cs/s1600-h/tea+party+poll.jpg (accessed April 26, 2010).

¹² *Tea Party slogans repository*, <http://www.teapartyslogans.com/cgi-bin/web/index.cgi> (accessed April 2010).

But, according to J.J. Judis, the TPM is not only a continuation of the conservative movements from the last decades, but it is more deep-rooted in American history.¹³ Supporters of the Movement invoke the fundamental ideas which have had a key role in American politics from the very beginnings of the country; purity in politics, the role of the individual, limited government, etc. Like the Puritans from 17th century New England, they also deplore the decay of social, economic and most of all political life. And similar to the Puritans, their object is to restore “the brightest period in U.S. history,” by eliminating the spread of evil and corruption from political life, using a special guidebook (for Puritans, it was the Bible). The Golden Age is the time of the Founding Fathers and the main tool to recreate it is the American Constitution.

The central role of the Constitution is evident during rallies and meetings of the supporters of the Tea Party Movement. The articles of Constitution and Amendments are cited during speeches and they sound like sermons by the preachers. The significance of the era of the Founding Fathers is also emphasized by one of the major characters of the Movement, Glenn Beck, who appeals to beatification of the Founding Fathers and the prophesizes national doom unless America repents.¹⁴ Finally, the name of the Movement and their clothes (such as tri-corner hats and “Don’t Tread on Me” flags) refer to American Revolution and the ethos of the Founding Fathers (especially Thomas Jefferson and George Washington).¹⁵

The obsession with the decline in U.S. political life means that the Movement can be also defined as a conspiratorial one. By using demagoguery and threats in his speeches, Beck emphasizes that Obama is a Marxist or socialist who should be perceived as an enemy, because he wants to destroy the country. Moreover, by repeated references to the President’s father, he implies that Obama is not an American citizen.¹⁶ The fear, and objections to Obama’s reform plans, especially the health care reform, can be also explained by appealing to the slogan of limited government. By increasing

¹³ Judis, “Tea minus zero...,” 19.

¹⁴ Sally Kohn, “Glenn Beck’s rampant misuse of founding fathers myths,” *Christian Science Monitor*, October 13, 2010.

¹⁵ The name “Tea Party Patriots” comes from the symbolic event of 1773 called “Boston Tea Party,” when the cargo of tea prepared for shipment to Europe was destroyed by colonists opposing taxes imposed on them by the British monarchy. On December 16th 1773, members of the “Sons of the Liberty” organisation threw into the waters of Boston’s bay entire cargo of the tea that was located on the ships Dartmouth, Eleanor and Beaver. This action was perceived as terroristic by the British and as patriotic by the colonists. It was a protest against imposing the Tea Act. As a punishment for sinking valuable cargo, Royal Navy closed the Boston port, which could lead to the city’s slow death. As a result it contributed to the radicalization of the separatist moods and the outbreak of the American Revolution. “No taxation without representation” was the main slogan of the protests, probably authored by Jonathan Mayhew. David Kopel, “The Catechism of the Revolution,” *Liberty Magazine*, November 2006, 26–28.

¹⁶ It is worth emphasizing that he is very effective in it. According to the polls, 34 percent of TPM members believe that Obama was born outside the United States and another 34 percent are not so sure. But not only the TPM supporters doubt in Obama’s citizenship; 51 percent of Republicans also are convinced of his lack of competence to be president.

The Public Policy Polling, *Huckabee tops GOP field, 51% are birthers and love Palin*, February 11–13, 2011, http://www.publicpolicypolling.com/pdf/PPP_Release_US_0215.pdf.

and strengthening the role of the state control over private lives of the citizens, the government is breaking one of the fundamental principles, created by the Founding Fathers.

Finally, the TPM refers to Andrew Jackson's tradition of democracy, especially to its populist roots.¹⁷ Although the populist movement is not a new phenomenon on the U.S. political scene, the TPM takes a distinctive place in it.

First, the doctrine of producerism assumes that workers should not share the fruits of their labor with institutions (like banks or the government) as well as with the underclass and illegal immigrants.¹⁸ TPM supporters perceive themselves as "working class" that stands in opposition to "non-working ones." In contrast to the conservatives from the 70s, who attacked and criticized the beneficiaries of welfare programs, TPM adherents feel "drained from both ends" – from the top by the government that imposes taxes and restrictions on the free market, and from the bottom by illegal immigrants and the poorer elements of society who gain benefits from welfare programs (derived from the taxes). Furthermore, the Tea Party accuses the government of unfair redistributions of the benefits "from the deserving to the undeserving" and warns of the danger of increasing numbers of illegal immigrants who are the main beneficiaries of welfare support.¹⁹ By their negative attitude to illegal aliens, especially from Latin America as well as Muslims, they are perceived as racists.

The distinctiveness of the TPM is also displayed through their activities. They are not focused on building a political structure but organizing protests and showing dissatisfaction of with policies and frustrations with government. On the one hand, its unwillingness to create a new organization is one of the advantages of the Movement but on the other hand, its lack of clear leadership and defined structures mean that the message of the TPM is not always clear.²⁰ Ron Paul, one of the Movement's followers, believes that the heterogeneity of the Tea Party, along with its dispersed organization, is its main advantage. People who are involved in the Movement arrange mass demonstrations via the Internet, while meetings of Tea Party enthusiasts take place in their homes or on social network services like Twitter, My Space or Facebook where they can also participate in various political debates. The fact that one of the biggest associations of conservatives in the U.S. exists thanks to the Internet, may be

¹⁷ More about Jacksonian Democracy, see in: Marvin Meyers, *The Jacksonian Persuasion* (New York: Vintage, 1957), 3–33.

¹⁸ Chip Berlet, Matthew N. Lyons, *Right-wing populism in America: Too close for comfort* (New York: Guilford Press 2000).

¹⁹ The governmental programs are spent on part of the society who do not contribute, who take benefits at the expense of hard-working Americans. Max Novendstern, "Tea Party Populism," *Harvard Political Review*, February 28, 2011.

²⁰ The movement is coalition of the hundreds of local and state-level groups that have differing rules and goals and for the most part have not participated in big-money politics. It is supported by e.g. the Freedom Works (defenders of the civil liberties), the Smart Girl Politics (brings together women who are tired of a political correctness) and RedState.com (a civic organization that defends the constitutional values). However, majority of the TPM supporters are against the formation of the new party.

considered as rather strange. But in terms of using the latest techniques, the Tea Party is an ultra-modern organization.

What is more, the supporters of the Movement are not only in opposition to the Democratic Party, but also their relations with Republicans are problematic. Although their views are mainly conservative, they feel disappointed with the positions represented by the Republican Party.²¹ As the polls conducted in April 2010 display, 44 percent of TPM enthusiasts had favorable views of the Republican Party, while the remaining 41 percent perceived themselves as independents.²² According to Scott Rasmussen, the lack of trust to both parties was caused by the disappointment of not being sufficiently-represented by elected politicians. Tea Party enthusiasts felt deeply alienated from the established political order and that is why part of many declared themselves as independents. As a conclusion, Rasmussen wrote that "the real issue driving the Tea Party Movement is not partisan rage on the right but a profound crisis of government legitimacy that should deeply concern us all."²³ Thus, Tocqueville's idea of the role of representation of the citizens in association (here party) was broken.

Finally, Timothy Dalrymple considers the populist character of the Movement through the lens of "social justice."²⁴ From his perspective, "Tea Partiers are perfectly willing to accept the need for moderate taxation and social services. Rather, Tea Partiers are objecting because they fear that Washington is caught in a vicious circle of reckless spending and political payback that will cripple our economy and harm all Americans, rich and poor."²⁵ Furthermore, "poisonous" policy and decisions made by Washington, fostering a culture of dependency and vote-buying, will adversely affect everyone, the poor most of all.

The fear of harmful management by the state as well the crisis of governmental legitimacy is common among TPM supporters. More than 90 percent of them claim that the country is headed in the wrong direction, while about six in ten believe that America's best years have already passed when it comes to the accessibility of good jobs

²¹ When Republican National Committee Chairman Michael Steele was asked to speak at the Chicago Tea Party on July 4th, his request was politely refused by the organizers: With regards to stage time, we respectfully must inform Chairman Steele that RNC officials are welcome to participate in the rally itself, but we prefer to limit stage time to those who are not elected officials, both in Government as well as political parties. This is an opportunity for Americans to speak, and elected officials to listen, not the other way around. Glenn Harlan Reynolds, Tax Day becomes Tax Protest Day, April 15, 2009, <http://www.123etcetera.com/etc-taxes.html> (accessed June 24, 2010).

²² CBS News/*New York Times* poll, April 5–12, 2010. What is interesting, the TPM enthusiasts didn't blame President Bush for current federal budget deficit caused during his two terms of presidency. Moreover, majority of them (57 percent) had favorable impression of President Bush.

²³ Scott Rasmussen and Douglas Schoen, *Mad as Hell: How the Tea Party Movement is Fundamentally Our Two-Party System* (New York: Harper, 2010), 15.

²⁴ Timothy Dalrymple, "Is the Tea Party a 'Social Justice' Movement"?, *Patheos.com*, June 16, 2010, <http://www.patheos.com/Resources/Additional-Resources/Is-the-Tea-Party-a-Social-Justice-Movement?offset=3&max=1> (accessed June 24, 2010).

²⁵ *Ibid.*

for American workers.²⁶ Adherents of the Tea Party believe that 53 percent of every tax dollar they send to Washington is “wasted.”²⁷ Furthermore, 73 percent of TPM enthusiasts claim that the President does not understand their problems and that the Congress is not representing the people.²⁸ Nearly all of them claim that President Obama is leading the country to socialism because his administration wants to support poor blacks on the shoulders of whites.

It should be mentioned that according to Rasmussen, “the distrust of political leaders, certainties that the government has become a special interest as well the collusion between business and the government at the expense of consumers and workers,” although radical, fit mainstream the Tea Party.²⁹ Moreover, the dangerous character of the Movement is also emphasized and strengthened by mass media, like ABC, CBS and NBC where the TPM is dismissed and disparaged. In accordance with the research conducted by the Media Research Center (MRC), 44 percent of news stories about the TPM suggested “that the movement reflected fringe and extremist nature.”³⁰ Furthermore, liberal media and politicians raise objections to TPM adherents by indicating racist attitudes toward African-Americans as well of being xenophobes who are afraid of the Muslims and secular humanism in society.³¹ However, polls demonstrate that the difference in the answers between TPM members and all White Anglo-Saxon Protestants respondents was only 10 percent which suggests, that the overwhelming majority of whites are racist and the TPM supporters are only a fraction more.³² As a conclusion, authors of the MRC research suggested that “negative treatment of the Tea Party is a glaring example of a media double standard. Rather than objectively document the rise and impact of this

²⁶ CBS News/New York Times poll, April 5–12, 2010.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Scott Rasmussen and Douglas Schoen, *Mad as Hell: How the Tea Party Movement is Fundamentally Our Two-Party System*, 86.

³⁰ Media Research Center, *TV's Tea Party Travesty*, April 2010, <http://archive.mrc.org/specialreports/2010/TeaParty/ExecSumm.aspx> (accessed May 25, 2010).

³¹ The significant majority of the supporters of the Movement come from Boom Town Counties, Tractor Counties and Military Bastions. “Boom Towns” are mainly in South-West areas of United States. They are characterized as fast-growing, changing and diversifying; once-thriving economies that are now falling on hard times; home to relatively affluent communities; experiencing growth of minority populations. The other big tea party numbers are in the rural, agricultural “Tractor Country” counties and in the “Military Bastion” counties, which are located near bases for the armed forces. Both of these community types have more than 2.8 tea-party members per 10 thousand people. The “Bastions” in particular have suffered as a steady string of troop deployments has left them unsteady. Dante Chinni, “Tea Party: How big is it, and where is it based”, *Patchwork Nation*, April 21, 2010 <http://patchworknation.csmonitor.com/csmstaff/2010/0421/tea-party-how-big-is-it-and-where-is-it-based/> (accessed May 3, 2010).

³² To the question about the support given by the government to African Americans, 83 percent of TPM adherents and 72 percent of all respondents responded that they received “less than they deserved” while 88 percent of the TPM supporters and 70 percent of the rest respondents agreed that “blacks should overcome prejudice without special favors.” University of Washington, *Multi-State Survey of Race & Politics*, March 2010, <http://depts.washington.edu/uwiser/racepolitics.html> (accessed May 25, 2010).

important grassroots movement, the “news” networks instead chose to first ignore, and then deplore, the citizen army mobilizing against the unpopular policies of a liberal President and Congress.”³³

The uniqueness of the Movement is also marked by the enormous political activity of women. As research conducted by Devin Burghart and Leonard Zeskind demonstrated, between a third and a half of the activists of the Movement are female and what is more important, women are leaders of several of the six largest Tea Party organizations.³⁴ Among the reasons for their involvement in the Movement researchers indicated: the role of religion in the Movement’s agenda, their marginalization in the Republican Party, their political ambitions and views as well their fears about the economic condition of their families (clearly explained by slogan: “My kids aren’t your ATM!”). In brief, the concept of gathering people around their common interests is a paramount feature of women’s participation in the TPM. Women found a political platform where indeed they can be active and present their opinions themselves.

Finally, it is important to answer a question about the origin of the Movement. Although followers of the TPM perceive themselves as a grassroots movement, the role of experienced politicians from the Republican Party is significant. Essentially, the beginnings of the Movement are considered Rick Santelli’s appeal made on CNBC to protest against Obama’s plan to help homeowners who were not able to pay for their mortgages. His appeal was heard and caught up by right-wing bloggers (e.g., Michael Patrick Leahy), media (Fox News, Sean Hannity and Glenn Beck) lobbies groups (e.g., FreedomWorks, run by Dick Armey) and politicians (e.g., Ron Paul, Sarah Palin) who attended the TPM rallies and spoke in the spirit of the Movement’s idea (“We are come to take our government back!”).³⁵ Moreover, instead of proclaiming views of political independence, TPM enthusiasts invited Sarah Palin, former vice-president candidate for the Republican Party, to their National Convention in Nashville. Palin was well received, although her speech, despite of her criticism of the Obama’s Administration, presented typical Republican views.³⁶

The increasing popularity of the Movement among both the society and conservative politicians tends to raise questions about the role of the TPM on the political scene. Do the supporters of the Movement have a chance to organize a “Tea Party” in American politics?

According to its database, it has already 67.000 members in every county across the United States. There is no doubt that this party has real power on the local level as there are regions in the country where conservative social ideas are sown in very fertile

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Devin Burghart, Leonard Zeskind, *Beyond FAIR Appendix A: Nativist Leaders Involved in Tea Party Activity*, January 18, 2012, <http://www.irehr.org/issue-areas/tea-party-nationalism/beyond-fair-report/itemlist/user/58-devinburghartandleonardzeskind> (accessed May 25, 2010). More about female activity in the TPM see: Ruth Rosen, “The Tea Party and Angry White Women,” *Dissent*, (Winter 2012): 61–65.

³⁵ Ron Paul, <http://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com/2010/11/02/rand-paul-weve-come-to-take-our-government-back/> (accessed May 25, 2010).

³⁶ Ben Smith, Andy Barr, “Tea Partiers shell out big bucks for Sarah Palin,” *Politico*, January 1, 2010.

ground. However, there are also others, like Washington state, where the Tea Party will not find enthusiasts.³⁷

An opinion poll conducted by Quinnipiac University on March 24, 2010 showed that if the Tea Party decided to slate candidates independently in elections, it would weaken Republicans, as it would take their votes. In a situation when there are only Democrats against Republicans, the former would get 39 percent of the voices while the latter – 44 percent. However, if the respondents were given the third choice, the Tea Party, Democrats would get 36 percent of the voices, Republicans 25 percent and the Tea Party 15 percent.³⁸ Single-member districts in the U.S. would mean that conservatives would have to split their votes and Democrats in such situations would certainly win. Looking at the preferences of the voters, the most beneficial solution both for the GOP and for the Tea Party would be to unite, which in turn would imply changes in the Republican Party. According to the CNN survey, 35 percent of Americans agree with the views advocated by the Tea Party.³⁹

The outcome of Republican primaries showed that the TPM had significant impact on the selection of the candidates. In Kentucky the primary was won by Ron Paul whose platform is closer to the TPM's than to that of Republicans. In Massachusetts Scott Brown won, supported by the Tea Party Express. Also in other states the Tea Party followers either helped Republican Congressmen (Florida) or drew up their own candidates as in Indiana (Marlin Stutzman), Alabama (Clint Moser), Arkansas (Trevor Drown) or New York (Doug Hoffman). The primaries held so far showed, that the TPM has a chance to exist on the political scene, not as an independent party, a new alternative to the current duopoly, but in a supporting role for the Republicans. On the other hand, 65 percent of Americans believe that their present representatives in Congress do not deserve re-election,⁴⁰ so there is a real "political gap" that could be filled precisely by the representatives of the Tea Party Movement.

Coming back to a question asked at the beginning of this article, the current "Tea Party" has little chance to overturn political and social scene, mainly because of the

³⁷ Against the health care reform were following states: Florida, Alabama, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, Washington, Louisiana and Virginia. They sued the act to the state courts. Other states that are governed by the Republicans want to follow in their footsteps. Similar situation was in the case of stimulus package, which was not passed in e.g. Nevada, South Carolina, Virginia, Louisiana, Texas. Marcin Bosacki, "Teksas niezawisły jest i basta, czyli awantura o stymulusa" [Texas is independent, so the row around stimulus package], *Gazeta Wyborcza*, April 16, 2010. Tami Luhby, "States: We'll take stimulus – our way," *CNNMoney.com*, March 20, 2009 http://money.cnn.com/2009/03/20/news/economy/stimulus_waivers/index.htm (accessed May 3, 2010).

³⁸ Poll by Quinnipiac University for Reuters, Tea Party candidates could damage Republicans, <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE62N5H620100324> (accessed May 3, 2010).

³⁹ CNN Opinion Poll Research, February 17, 2010, <http://i2.cdn.turner.com/cnn/2010/images/02/17/re4b.pdf> (accessed May 25, 2010).

⁴⁰ Answering the question: Do Most Members of the Congress Deserve Re-election by Party Id? Eighty five percent of Republicans say "no", 72 percent of Independents and 41 percent of Democrats. Gallup Poll, April 7, 2010, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/127241/Voters-Issue-Strong-Rebuke-Incumbents-Congress.aspx> (accessed May 3, 2010).

resistance to create a new organization. This feature makes the Movement distinctive in U.S. politics. Although the main objective for adherents is to protest, the TPM could influence the balance of the power between the dominant parties. It could also create a new type of voter – as Mark Lilla noted – *the anti-political Jacobin*⁴¹ who trusts no political institution, has enormous self-confidence; who perceives political life as an apocalyptic catastrophe, but assesses his own possibilities as infinite his or her aim will be to *take back America*.

As Tocqueville noted: “I have often admired the extreme skill [Americans] show in proposing a common object for the exertions of very many and in inducing them voluntarily to pursue it.”⁴² Americans have always been extremely effective in establishing new associations which served to change the political order. Looking at the structure and the attitude of the TPM members to create a new, well-developed political organization, Tocqueville would probably feel disappointed.

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⁴¹ Mark Lilla, „Politycy, już was nie potrzebujemy,” [Politicians, we do not need you] *Gazeta Wyborcza*, May 22–23, 2010.

⁴² Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (New York:Perennial, New York, 2000), 514.